



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office

1655 Heindon Road

Arcata, CA 95521-5582

Phone: (707) 822-7201 Fax: (707) 822-8411



In Reply Refer To:

JUN 08 2004

Michael Bowen
California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

Subject: Coastal Wetland Grant Program Proposal for the Redwood Creek Estuary near the town of Orick, Humboldt County, California.

Dear Mr. Bowen:

We are writing in support of a proposal submitted by the California Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program. The proposal requests funds to acquire the 108 acre McNamara Ranch adjacent to the Redwood Creek estuary near the town of Orick in northern California. Accompanied by restrictions to the property, the acquisition will protect the property from development, provide opportunities to enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and allow for compatible agricultural practices to be established. These efforts will be key to begin improving the function of wetlands on the property and ultimately the estuary. The proposal is the first step in the process towards active enhancement of the area.

Staff Biologists at the Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office (AFWO) have worked on many projects associated with the Redwood Creek estuary during the past several years and are familiar with the area, it's history, and current issues. Historical accounts, photographs, and current information show that the estuary once functioned as a coastal lagoon with periodic closures and breaches as a part of natural coastal processes. The estuary and lower valley area included an extensive Sitka spruce forest along with coastal scrub and dune plant communities. Redwood Creek had access to it's floodplain, which provided off-channel forested and wetland habitats for birds, fish, amphibians and other species dependent on diverse aquatic areas.

Abundant fish resources existed, including coho and Chinook salmon, steelhead and cutthroat trout, eulachon, tidewater goby and others. Many wildlife species also frequented the area, including bald eagles, neotropical migratory birds, waterfowl, seabirds, and Roosevelt elk.

Michael Bowen

While it is unlikely that future enhancement efforts will fully restore the estuary, it is important to understand how the area functioned historically so that enhancement efforts can mimic selected parameters aimed at benefitting species such as salmon and migratory birds that were once abundant in this area.

The AFWO supports voluntary partnerships with landowners and agencies to improve estuary function. Future efforts should focus on improving the tidal prism, considering levee setbacks to allow Redwood Creek access to its floodplain including the north slough channel and the former south channel meander. Re-development of a diverse riparian area along with other key plant communities is also important when considering future enhancement of the estuary. A well-developed riparian area can eventually provide wood structure to the channel, stream bank stability, and important habitats for birds, fish and other species.

Several species have the potential to benefit from improved conditions and land use in the Redwood Creek estuary. These include coho and chinook salmon, steelhead, cutthroat, tidewater goby, brown pelican, bald eagle, other migratory waterbirds, seabirds, and sensitive amphibians. Many of these species are federally listed as endangered or threatened.

Two of the most significant factors limiting anadromous salmon species in Redwood Creek are degraded conditions at the estuary and sedimentation of instream conditions in the upper watershed. Millions of dollars have been spent on enhancement and restoration projects during the last 20 years upstream of the estuary in Redwood National and State Parks (Park) and on private land. These projects have contributed to improving instream conditions for many aquatic and terrestrial species including anadromous fish by helping to decrease erosion into the creek from road-related problems. The projects have been funded through various state and federal sources including the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and have focused on helping interested landowners and land managers improve the watershed. While the focus of enhancement work has been upstream, the estuary remains in need of critical improvement for the benefit of anadromous fish but also for many other species.

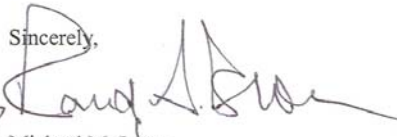
The Service continues to have funding sources available for enhancement and restoration projects. Restoration staff of AFWO will be available to work with willing landowners or their representatives, and other agencies at developing projects for funding when interest and opportunities arise.

The estuary is an essential part of the watershed. Realistic opportunities for improving this area have not existed until now and the Conservancy proposal is the first step to partner with landowners on improving the condition of this important estuary.

Michael Bowen

If you have any questions, please contact Paula Golightly, of my staff, at 707-822-7201.

Sincerely,

Active 504

Michael M. Long
Field Supervisor

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JUN 09 2004

COASTAL CONSERVATION
OAKLAND, CALIF.

cc:

CDFG, Fortuna, CA (Attn: Scott Downie, Gary Flosi, Mark Wheetley)

Redwood National and State Parks, Orick (Attn: Terry Hofstra)

Northcoast Regional Land Trust, Bayside (Attn: Maya Conrad)

NOAA Fisheries, Arcata (Attn: Irma Lagomarsino)

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, OR (Attn: Verlyn Ebert)





**United States Department of the Interior
California Department of Parks and Recreation**

Redwood National and State Parks
1111 Second Street
Crescent City, California 95531



L1425 (McNamara)

June 17, 2004

Michael Bowen
Project Manager
Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Mr. Bowen:

Redwood National and State Parks is pleased to provide this letter of support for the McNamara Dairy acquisition project. We are excited about this project because it includes the community of Orick in a plan to provide a degree of flexibility that will be necessary when considering options to rehabilitate the Redwood Creek estuary. It will also help to create a continuum of fish and wildlife habitat, as the property is near already protected parklands.

Coastal bottomlands, including working dairies in northern Humboldt County, are home to migratory birds such as Aleutian geese. The McNamara Dairy is adjacent to Redwood Creek, an important salmon-bearing creek provides a wonderful opportunity for the community of Orick to balance habitat enhancement with sustainable agricultural production and we are pleased that you have their support for it.

Redwood National and State Parks is committed to implementing restoration and public education projects on coastal wetlands in and around the park, and will be a partner in the restoration and educational efforts afforded by this acquisition. Thank you for the opportunity to be involved. Please contact me if you would like to further discuss this project or our participation.

Sincerely,

Bill Pierce
Superintendent

Mel & Grace
**McLean
Foundation**
HUMBOLDT COUNTY

June 3, 2004

Michael Bowen
Project Manager
Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612
FAX: (510) 286-0470

Dear Mr. Bowen,

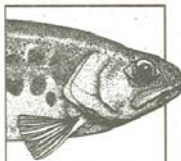
On behalf of the Melvin F. & Grace McLean Foundation, I am writing to express our support of the partnership between the Coastal Conservancy and the Northcoast Regional Land Trust to acquire the McNamara Dairy. We are pleased to be considering a matching grant in the amount of \$5,000 for the McNamara Dairy project whose goal is to benefit the economy of Humboldt County through open space, fisheries protection and maintenance of sustainable agricultural operations.

The McLean Foundation has worked with the Northcoast Regional Land Trust in the past, having provided a start-up grant for the organization in 2000. We are pleased to have seen the progress of this organization in the past few years, and the benefits it is bringing to our community.

Thank you for joining in this project to protect coastal wetlands in Humboldt County. Please contact me if I can be of assistance or provide you with any additional information.

Sincerely,


Leigh Pierre-Oetker
Executive Director
McLean Foundation



SMITH RIVER ALLIANCE

P.O. Box 2129, Crescent City, CA 95531

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Gregory A. Thomas

*Natural Heritage Institute**

Tom Weseloh

*California Trout**

Bill Yeates

**Organizations listed for
identification purposes only.*

June 5, 2004

Michael Bowen, Project Manager
Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612
FAX: (510) 286-0470

RE: Support for USFWS Grant for the acquisition of the McNamara Dairy

Dear Michael:

The Smith River Alliance (SRA) strongly supports your request to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for a Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant for the acquisition of the McNamara Dairy in Humboldt County, California.

SRA also supports and appreciates the work of the Northcoast Regional Land Trust and its conservation partners to protect and restore the salmonid habitat in Redwood Creek.

The McNamara Dairy acquisition is an excellent opportunity to protect and restore steelhead and coastal cutthroat trout populations in Redwood Creek. Moreover, we agree with the Coastal Conservancy and other partners that the estuary is a limiting factor for salmonid production and that estuary acquisitions should be a high priority for funding.

We deeply appreciate your efforts on this project and look forward to our continued collaboration with you to protect and restore salmonid habitat along the North Coast.

Sincerely yours,

Grant D. Werschull, Executive Director

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JUN 07 2004

COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CA

CALIFORNIA TROUT



June 4, 2004

Paul Morabito, Chair
c/o Michael Bowen, Project Manager
Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612
FAX: (510) 286-0470

RE: Support for USFWS Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant for the acquisition of the McNamara Dairy in Humboldt County

Michael
Dear Mr. Bowen,

California Trout fully supports your request to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for a Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant for the acquisition of the McNamara Dairy in Humboldt County, California. I understand that the acquisition of this ranch will enable the Northcoast Regional Land Trust and its conservation partners to pursue protection and restoration of the fisheries and wildlife habitat in Redwood Creek.

California Trout's mission is "to protect and restore wild trout and steelhead and their waters throughout California". The McNamara Dairy acquisition is an excellent opportunity to protect and restore steelhead and coastal cutthroat trout populations in Redwood Creek. California Trout is partnering with other conservation organizations, state and federal agencies and private landowners to restore the estuary and will provide technical expertise and assistance towards the restoration efforts of Redwood Creek.

We have consistently supported monitoring and restoration efforts in Redwood Creek and will continue to commit our resources toward estuary restoration. We agree with the Coastal Conservancy and other partners that the estuary is a limiting factor for salmonid production and an extremely high priority for funding.

We appreciate your efforts towards this project and look forward to our continued cooperation. Please let us know how we can be of further assistance in expediting this project.

We strongly support your request for funding.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Weseloh, Northcoast Manager

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JUN 07 2004

COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.

1976 Archer Road • McKinleyville, CA 95519
Phone/Fax: (707) 839-1056 • E-mail: caltrout@reninet.com

Paul Morabito, Chair
c/o Michael Bowen, Project Manager
Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Support for USFWS Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant for the acquisition of the McNamara Dairy in Humboldt County

Dear Chairman Morabito,

I am a retired biologist with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and have served on the Aleutian Canada Goose Recovery Team since 1975. Although the goose was delisted as an endangered species in 2001, the team is continuing the required monitoring to determine the security of the bird for next 5 years.

I fully support the Conservancy's request to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for a Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant for the acquisition of the McNamara Dairy in Humboldt County, California. I understand that the acquisition of this ranch will enable the Northcoast Regional Land Trust and its conservation partners to pursue simultaneously the protection of valuable agricultural land, and the protection and restoration of the fisheries and wildlife habitat in the Orick Valley.

Fertile coastal grazing lands such as the Orick Valley provide important habitat for waterfowl including the Aleutian Canada goose. As the goose population has increased, the traditional spring staging area of the bird has expanded from the Crescent City/Smith River area in Del Norte County to the Humboldt Bay area. Acquisition and management of agricultural lands in the Orick Valley between the two locations would provide additional secure habitat for the geese and other migratory birds.

I understand the Conservancy and NRLT's primary goals for purchasing this property are two-fold; 1) to preserve the 108-acre ranch as a sustainable, viable coastal agricultural property and 2) to provide willing partnership in lower Redwood Creek estuary enhancement. As the owner of the property, NRLT's intention would be to maintain the property as private, sustainable agricultural land that also provides estuary enhancement. A management plan would be developed that supports fish and wildlife habitat needs for species that include, among others, the Aleutian Canada goose and four Pacific salmonid species.

I strongly support the Conservancy's proposal to this program.

Sincerely,

Paul Springer